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ROSCIAD:

A POEM.

BY

C. CHURCHILL.

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THE

ROSCIAD.

ROSCIUS deceas'd, each high aſpiring Play'r
Puſh'd all his int'reſt for the vacant chair.
The buſkin'd Heroes of the mimic ſtage
No longer whine in love, and rant in rage;
The monarch quits his throne, and condeſcends
Humbly to court the favour of his friends;
For pity's ſake tells undeſerv'd miſhaps,
And, their applauſe to gain, recounts his claps.
Thus the victorious chiefs of ancient Rome,
To win the mob, a ſuppliants form aſſume,
In pompous ſtrain fight o'er th' extinguiſh'd war,
And ſhew where honour bled in ev'ry ſcar.

But though bare Merit might in Rome appear
The ſtrongeſt plea for favour, 'tis not here;
We form our judgment in another way;
And they will beſt ſucceed, who beſt can pay:
Thoſe who would gain the votes of Britiſh tribes,
Muſt add to force of Merit, force of Bribes.

What can an actor give? in ev'ry age
Caſh hath been rudely baniſh'd from the ſtage;
Monarchs themſelves, to grief of ev'ry play'r,
Appear as often as their image there:

They can't, like candidate for other ſeat,
Pour ſeas of wine, and mountains raiſe of meat.
Wine! they could bribe you with the world as ſoon,
And of roaſt beef, they only know the tune:
But what they have they give; could CLIVE do more,
Though for each million he had brought home four?

SHUTER keeps open houſe at Southwark fair,
And hopes the friends of humour will be there;
In Smithfield, YATES prepares the rival treat
For thoſe who laughter love, inſtead of meat;
FOOTE, at Old Houſe, for even FOOTE will be,
In ſelf-conceit, an actor, bribes with tea;
Which WILKINSON at ſecond-hand receives,
And at the New, pours water on the leaves.

The town divided, each runs ſev'ral ways,
As paſſion, humour, int'reſt, party ſways.
Things of no moment, colour of the hair,
Shape of a leg, complexion brown or fair,
A dreſs well choſen, or a patch miſplac'd,
Conciliate favour, or create diſtaſte.

From galleries loud peals of laughter roll,
And thunder SHUTER's praiſes,——he's ſo *droll*.
Embox'd, the ladies muſt have ſomething ſmart,
PALMER! oh! PALMER tops the janty part.
Seated in pit, the dwarf with aching eyes,
Looks up, and vows that BARRY's out of ſize;
Whilſt to ſix feet the vig'rous ſtripling grown,
Declares that GARRICK is another COAN.

When place of judgment is by whim ſupply'd,
And our opinions have their riſe in pride;
When, in diſcourſing on each mimic elf,
We praiſe and cenſure with an eye to ſelf;
All muſt meet friends, and ACKMAN bids as fair
In ſuch a court, as GARRICK, for the chair.

At length agreed, all ſquabbles to decide,
By ſome one judge the cauſe was to be try'd;

But

But this their ſquabbles *did* afreſh renew,
Who ſhould be judge in ſuch a trial:—Who?

For JOHNSON ſome, but JOHNSON, it was fear'd,
Would be too grave; and STERNE too gay appear'd;
Others for FRANKLIN voted; but 'twas known,
He ſicken'd at all triumphs but his own;
For COLMAN many, but the peeviſh tongue
Of prudent Age found out that he was Young.
For MURPHY ſome few *pilf'ring* wits declar'd,
Whilſt FOLLY clapp'd her hands, and WISDOM ſtar'd.

To miſchief train'd e'en from his mother's womb,
Grown old in fraud, tho' yet in manhood's bloom,
Adopting arts, by which gay villains riſe,
And reach the heights, which honeſt men deſpiſe;
Mute at the bar, and in the ſenate loud,
Dull 'mongſt the dulleſt, proudeſt of the proud;
A pert, prim, Prater of the *northern* race,
Guilt in his heart, and famine in his face,
Stood forth,—and thrice he wav'd his lilly hand—
And thrice he twirl'd his Tye--thrice ſtrok'd his band--

"At Friendſhip's call (thus oft with trait'rous aim,
Men, void of faith, uſurp faith's ſacred name)
"At Friendſhip's call I come, by MURPHY ſent,
"Who thus by me *developes* his intent.
"But leſt, *tranſfuſ'd*, the Spirit ſhould be loſt,
"That Spirit, which in ſtorms of *Rhet'ric* toſt,
"Bounces about, and flies like bottled beer,
"In his own words his own intentions hear.

"Thanks to my friends —But to vile fortunes born,
"No robes of fur theſe ſhoulders muſt adorn.
"Vain your applauſe, no aid from thence I draw;
"Vain all my wit,—for what is wit in law?
"Twice (curs'd rememb'rance!) twice I ſtrove to gain
"Admittance 'mongſt the law-inſtructed train,
"Who, in the TEMPLE and GRAY'S-INN, prepare
"For client's wretched feet the legal ſnare:

" Dead to thoſe arts, which poliſh and refine,
" Deaf to all worth, becauſe that worth was *Mine*,
" Twice did thoſe blockheads ſtartle at my name,
" And foul rejection gave me up to ſhame.
" To laws and lawyers then I bad adieu,
" And plans of far more lib'ral note purſue.
" Who will may be a Judge—my kindling breaſt
" Burns for that Chair which Roscius once poſſeſs'd.
" *Here* give your votes, your int'reſt *here* exert,
" And let ſucceſs for *once* attend Deſert."

With ſleek appearance, and with ambling pace,
And, type of vacant head, with vacant face,
The Proteus HILL put in his *modeſt* plea,—
" Let Favour ſpeak for others, Worth for me."—
For who, like him, his various pow'rs could call
Into ſo many ſhapes, and ſhine in all?
Who could ſo nobly grace the motley liſt,
Actor, *Inſpector*, *Doctor*, *Botaniſt*?
Knows any one ſo well—ſure no one knows,—
At once to *play*, *preſcribe*, *compound*, *compoſe*?
Who can—But WOODWARD came,—HILL ſlipp'd away,
Melting, like ghoſts, before the riſing day.

With that *low* CUNNING, which in fools ſupplies,
And amply too, the place of being wiſe,
Which Nature, kind indulgent parent, gave
To qualify the Blockhead for a Knave;
With that *ſmooth* FALSHOOD, whoſe appearance charms,
And reaſon of each wholeſome doubt diſarms,
Which to the loweſt depths of guile deſcends,
By vileſt means purſues the vileſt ends,
Wears Friendſhip's maſk for purpoſes of ſpite,
Fawns in the day, and Butchers in the night;
With that *malignant* ENVY, which turns pale,
And ſickens even if a friend prevail,
Which merit and ſucceſs purſues with hate,

With the *cold* CAUTION of a coward's ſpleen,
Which fears not guilt, but always ſeeks a ſcreen,
Which keeps this maxim ever in her view—
What's *baſely* done, ſhould be done *ſafely* too;
With that *dull, rooted, callous* IMPUDENCE,
Which, dead to ſhame, and ev'ry nicer ſenſe,
Ne'er bluſh'd, unleſs, in ſpreading VICE's ſnares,
She blunder'd on ſome Virtue *unawares;*
With all theſe bleſſings, which we ſeldom find
Laviſh'd by nature on *one* happy mind,
A motely Figure, of the FRIBBLE Tribe,
Which heart can ſcarce conceive, or pen deſcribe,
Came *ſimp'ring* on; to aſcertain whoſe ſex
Twelve, ſage, *impannell'd* Matrons would perplex.
Nor *Male*, nor *Female; Neither*, and yet both;
Of *Neuter* Gender, tho' of *Iriſh* growth;
A ſix-foot ſuckling, mincing in *Its* gait;
Affected, peeviſh, prim, and delicate;
Fearful *It* ſeem'd, tho' of Athletic make,
Leſt *brutal breezes* ſhould too roughly ſhake
Its tender form, and *ſavage* motion ſpread,
O'er *Its* pale cheeks, the horrid manly red.

Much did *It* talk, in *Its* own *pretty* phraſe,
Of Genius and of Taſte, of Play'rs and Plays;
Much too of writings, which *Itſelf* had wrote,
Of ſpecial merit, tho' of little note;
For Fate, in a ſtrange humour, had decreed
That what *It* wrote, none but *Itſelf* ſhould read;
Much too *It* chatter'd of *Dramatic* Laws,
Misjudging Critics, and miſplac'd applauſe,
Then, with a ſelf-complacent jutting air,
It ſmil'd, It ſmirk'd, It wriggled to the chair;
And, with an aukward briſkneſs not *its* own,
Looking around, and *perking* on the throne,
Triumphant ſeem'd, when that ſtrange ſavage Dame,
Known but to few, or only known by name,
Plain COMMON SENSE appear'd, by Nature there
Appointed, with plain TRUTH, to guard the Chair.

The Pageant ſaw, and blaſted with her frown,
To *Its* firſt ſtate of Nothing melted down.

Nor ſhall the Muse (for even there the pride
Of this *vain Nothing* ſhall be mortified)
Nor ſhall the Muse (ſhould Fate ordain her rhimes,
Fond, pleaſing thought! to live in after-times)
With ſuch a Trifler's name her pages blot;
Known be the Character, the *Thing* forgot;
Let *It*, to diſappoint each future aim,
Live without Sex, and die without a name!

Cold-blooded critics, by enervate fires
Scarce hammer'd out, when nature's feeble fires
Glimmer'd their laſt; whoſe ſluggiſh blood, half froze,
Creeps lab'ring thro' the veins; whoſe heart ne'er glows
With fancy kindled heat:—A ſervile race,
Who, in mere want of fault, all merit place;
Who blind obedience pay to ancient ſchools,
Bigots to Greece, and ſlaves to muſty rules;
With ſolemn conſequence declar'd that none
Could judge that cauſe but Sophocles alone:
Dupes to their fancied excellence, the crowd,
Obſequious to the ſacred dictate, bow'd.

When, from amidſt the throng, a Youth ſtood forth,
Unknown his perſon, not unknown his worth;
His looks beſpoke applauſe; alone he ſtood,
Alone he ſtemm'd the mighty critic flood.
He talk'd of ancients, as the man became
Who priz'd our own, but envied not their fame;
With noble rev'rence ſpoke of Greece and Rome,
And ſcorn'd to tear the laurel from the tomb.

"But more than juſt to other countries grown,
"Muſt we turn baſe apoſtates to our own?
"Where do theſe words of Greece and Rome excel,
"That England may not pleaſe the ear as well?
"What mighty magic's in the place or air,
"That all perfection needs muſt centre there?

"I-

" In ſtates, let ſtrangers blindly be preferr'd;
" In ſtate of letters, Merit ſhould be heard.
" Genius is of no country, her pure ray
" Spreads all abroad, as gen'ral as the day:
" Foe to reſtraint, from place to place ſhe flies,
" And may hereafter e'en in Holland riſe.
" May not (to give a pleaſing fancy ſcope,
" And chear a patriot heart with patriot hope)
" May not ſome great extenſive genius raiſe
" The name of Britan 'bove Athenian praiſe;
" And, whilſt brave thirſt of fame his boſom warms,
" Make England great in Letters as in Arms?
" There may—there hath—and SHAKESPEARE'S muſe aſpires
" Beyond the reach of Greece; with native fires
" Mounting aloft, he wings his daring flight,
" Whilſt SOPHOCLES below ſtands trembling at his height.

" Why ſhould we then abroad for judges roam,
" When abler judges we may find at home?
" Happy in tragic and in comic pow'rs,
" Have we not SHAKESPEARE?—Is not JOHNSON ours?
" For them, your nat'ral judges, Britons, vote;
" They'll judge like Britons, who like Britons wrote."

He ſaid, and conquer'd—Senſe reſum'd her ſway,
And diſappointed pedants ſtalk'd away.
SHAKESPEARE and JOHNSON, with deſerv'd applauſe,
Joint-judges were ordain'd to try the cauſe.
Mean-time the ſtranger ev'ry voice employ'd,
To aſk or tell his name.—Who is it?—LLOYD.

Thus, when the aged friends of Job ſtood mute,
And, tamely prudent, gave up the diſpute,
ELIHU, with the decent warmth of youth,
Boldly ſtood forth the advocate of Truth;

Confuted Falſhood, and diſabled pride,
Whilſt baffled age ſtood ſnarling at his ſide.

The day of tryal's fix'd, nor any fear
Leſt day of tryal ſhould be put off here.
Cauſes but ſeldom for delay can call
In courts where forms are few, fees none at all.

The morning came, nor find I that the ſun,
As he on other great events hath done,
Put on a brighter robe than what he wore
To go his journey in the day before.

Full in the centre of a ſpacious plain,
On plan entirely new, where nothing vain,
Nothing magnificent appear'd, but Art,
With decent modeſty perform'd her part,
Roſe a tribunal: from no other court
It borrow'd ornament, or ſought ſupport:
No juries here were pack'd to kill or clear,
No bribes were taken, nor oaths broken here;
No gownſmen, partial to a client's cauſe,
To their own purpoſe tun'd the pliant laws:
Each judge was true and ſteady to his truſt,
As MANSFIELD wiſe, and as old FOSTER juſt.

In the firſt ſeat, in robe of various dyes,
A noble wildneſs flaſhing from his eyes,
Sat SHAKESPEARE.—In one hand a wand he bore,
For mighty wonders fam'd in days of yore;
The other held a globe which to his will
Obedient turn'd, and own'd the maſter's ſkill:
Things of the nobleſt kind his genius drew,
And look'd through Nature at a ſingle view:
A looſe he gave to his unbounded ſoul,
And t-ught new lands to riſe, new ſeas to roll;
Call'd into being ſcenes unknown b fore,
And, paſſing Nature's bounds, was ſomething more

Next JOHNSON ſat, in ancient learning train'd,
His rigid Judgment Fancy's flights reſtrain'd,

Correctly prun'd each wild luxuriant thought,
Mark'd out her course, nor spar'd a glorious fault.
The book of man he read with nicest art,
And ransack'd all the secrets of the heart;
Exerted Penetration's utmost force,
And trac'd each passion to it's proper source;
Then, strongly mark'd, in liveliest colours drew,
And brought each foible forth to public view.
The Coxcomb felt a lash in ev'ry word,
And fools, hung out, their brother fools deterr'd.
His comic humour kept the world in awe,
And laughter frightened Folly more than law.

But, hark!—The trumpet sounds, the crowd gives way,
And the procession comes in just array.

Now should I, in some sweet poetic line,
Offer up incense at APOLLO's shrine;
Invoke the muse to quit her calm abode,
And waken mem'ry with a sleeping ode.
For how should mortal man, in mortal verse,
Their titles, merits, or their names rehearse?
But give, kind DULNESS, memory and rhime,
We'll put off Genius till another time.

First, ORDER came,—with solemn step, and slow,
In measur'd time his feet were taught to go.
Behind, from time to time, he cast his eye,
Lest This should quit his place, That step awry.
Appearances to save his only care;
So things seem right, no matter what they are.
In him his parents saw themselves renew'd,
Begotten by *Sir* CRITIC on *Saint* PRUDE.

Then came *Drum*, *Trumpet*, *Hautboy*, *Fiddle*, *Flute*;
Next *Snuffer*, *Sweeper*, *Shifter*, *Soldier*, *Mute*:
Legions of Angels all in *white* advance;
Furies, all *fire*, come forward in a dance;
Pantomime figures then are brought to view,
Fools hand in hand with Fools, go two by two.

Next came the Treaſurer of either houſe;
One with full purſe, t'other with not a ſous.
Behind, a group of figures awe create,
Set off with all th' impertinence of ſtate;
By lace and feather conſecrate to fame,
Expletive Kings, and Queens without a name.

Here HAVARD, all ſerene, in the ſame ſtrains,
Loves, hates, and rages, triumphs, and complains;
His eaſy vacant face proclaim'd a heart
Which could not feel emotions, nor impart.
With him came mighty DAVIES. On my life,
That DAVIES hath a very pretty wife!—
Statefman all over!—In plots famous grown!—
He mouthes a ſentence, as curs mouthe a bone.

Next HOLLAND came.—With truly tragic ſtalk,
He creeps, he flies.—A Hero ſhould not walk.
As if with heav'n he warr'd his eager eyes
Planted their batteries againſt the ſkies,
Attitude, Action, Air, Pauſe, Start, Sigh, Groan,
He borrow'd, and made uſe of as his own.
By fortune thrown on any other ſtage,
He might, *perhaps*, have pleas'd an eaſy age;
But now appears a copy, and no more,
Of ſomething better we have ſeen before.
The actor who would build a ſolid fame,
Muſt imitation's ſervile arts diſclaim;
Act from himſelf, on his own bottom ſtand;
I hate e'en GARRICK thus at ſecond hand.

Behind came KING.—Bred up in modeſt lore,
Baſhful and young he ſought Hibernia's ſhore;
Hibernia, fam'd 'bove ev'ry other grace,
For matchleſs intrepidity of face.
From Her his Features caught the gen'rous flame,
And bid defiance to all ſenſe of ſhame:
Tutor'd by Her all rivals to ſurpaſs,
'Mongſt DRURY's ſons he comes, and ſhines in BRASS.

Lo YATES!—Without the leaſt fineſſe of art
He gets applauſe!—I wiſh he'd get his part.
When hot impatience is in full career,
How vilely "Hark'e! Hark'e!" grates the ear?
When active fancy from the brain is ſent,
And ſtands on tip-toe for ſome wiſh'd event,
I hate thoſe careleſs blunders which recall
Suſpended ſenſe, and prove it fiction all.

In characters of low and vulgar mould,
Where nature's coarſeſt features we behold,
Where, deſtitute of ev'ry decent grace,
Unmanner'd jeſts are blurted in your face,
There YATES with juſtice ſtrict attention draws,
Acts truly from himſelf, and gains applauſe.
But when, to pleaſe himſelf or charm his wife,
He aims at ſomething in politer life,
When, blindly thwarting Nature's ſtubborn plan,
He treads the ſtage, by way of gentleman,
The clown, who no one touch of breeding knows,
Looks like TOM ERRAND dreſs'd in CLINCHER'S cloaths.
Fond of his dreſs, fond of his perſon grown,
Laugh'd at by all, and to himſelf unknown,
From ſide to ſide he ſtruts, he ſmiles, he prates,
And ſeems to wonder what's become of YATES.

WOODWARD, endow'd with various tricks of face,
Great maſter in the ſcience of grimace,
From Ireland ventures, fav'rite of the town,
Lur'd by the pleaſing proſpect of renown;
A ſpeaking Harlequin, made up of whim,
He twiſts he twines, he tortures ev'ry limb,
Plays to the eye with a mere monkey's art,
And leaves to ſenſe the conqueſt of the heart.
We laugh indeed, but on reflection's birth,
We wonder at ourſelves, and curſe our mirth.
His walk of parts he fatally miſplac'd,
And inclination fondly took for taſte;

Hence

Hence hath the town ſo often ſeen diſplay'd
Beau in Burleſque, High Life in Maſquerade.

But when bold Wits, not ſuch as patch up plays,
Cold and correct, in theſe inſipid days,
Some comic character, ſtrong featur'd, urge
To probability's extremeſt verge,
Where modeſt judgment her decree ſuſpends,
And for a time, nor cenſures, nor commends,
Where critics can't determine on the ſpot,
Whether it is in Nature found or not,
There WOODWARD ſafely ſhall his pow'rs exert,
Nor fail of favour where he ſhews deſert.
Hence he in Bobadil ſuch praiſes bore,
Such worthy praiſes, Kitely ſcarce had more.

By turns transform'd into all kind of ſhapes,
Conſtant to none, FOOTE laughs, cries, ſtruts, and ſcrapes;
Now in the centre, now in van or rear,
The Proteus ſhifts, *Bawd*, *Parſon*, *Auctioneer*,
His ſtrokes of humour, and his burſts of ſport
Are all contain'd in this one word, *Diſtort*.

Doth a man ſtutter, look a-ſquint, or halt?
Mimics draw humour out of Nature's fault:
With perſonal defects their mirth adorn,
And hang misfortunes out to public ſcorn.
E'en I, whom Nature caſt in hideous mould,
Whom, having made, ſhe trembled to behold,
Beneath the load of mimicry may groan,
And find that Nature's errors are my own.

Shadows behind of FOOTE and WOODWARD came;
WILKINSON this, OBRIEN was that name.
Strange to relate, but wonderfully true,
That even ſhadows have their ſhadows too!
With not a ſingle comic pow'r endu'd,
The firſt a mere mere mimic's mimic ſtood.
The laſt, by Nature form'd to pleaſe, who ſhows,
In JOHNSON'S Stephen, which way Genius grows,

Self

Self quite put off, affects, with to much art,
To put on WOODWARD in each mangled part;
Adopts his shrug, his wink, his stare; nay, more,
His voice, and croaks; for WOODWARD croak'd be-
When a dull copier simple grace neglects, [fore.
And rests his imitation in Defects,
We readily forgive; but such vile arts
Are double guilt in men of real parts.

By nature form'd in her perverseſt mood,
With no one requiſite of Art endu'd,
Next JACKSON came—Obſerve that ſettled glare,
Which better ſpeaks a Puppet than a Play'r;
Liſt to that voice—did ever DISCORD hear
Sounds ſo well fitted to her untun'd ear?
When, to enforce ſome very tender part,
The right hand ſleeps by inſtinct on the heart,
His ſoul, of every other thought bereft,
Is anxious only where to place the left;
He ſobs and pants to ſooth his weeping ſpouſe,
To ſooth his weeping mother, turns and bows.
Aukward, embarraſs'd, ſtiff, without the ſkill
Of moving gracefully, or ſtanding ſtill,
One leg, as if ſuſpicious of his brother,
Deſirous ſeems to run away from t'other.

Some errors, handed down from age to age,
Plead Cuſtom's force, and ſtill poſſeſs the ſtage.
That's vile—ſhould we a parent's faults adore,
And err, becauſe our father's err'd before?
If, inattentive to the author's mind,
Some actors made the jeſt they could not find,
If by low tricks they marr'd fair Nature's mien,
And blurr'd the graces of the ſimple ſcene,
Shall we, if reaſon rightly is employ'd,
Not ſee their faults, or ſeeing not avoid?
When FALSTAFF ſtands detected in a lie,
Why, without meaning, rowls LOVE's glaſſy eye?

Why?

Why?—There's no cauſe—at leaſt no cauſe we know—
It was the Faſhion twenty years ago.
Faſhion—a word which knaves and fools may uſe
Their knavery and folly to excuſe.
To copy beauties, forfeits all pretence
To fame—to copy faults, is want of ſenſe.

Yet (tho' in ſome particulars he fails,
Some few particulars, where MODE prevails)
If in theſe hallow'd times when ſober, ſad,
All GENTLEMEN are melancholy mad,
When 'tis not deem'd ſo great a crime by half
To violate a veſtal, as to laugh,
Rude mirth may hope preſumptuous to engage
An Act of Toleration for the ſtage,
And courtiers will, like reaſonable creatures,
Suſpend vain Faſhion, and unſcrew their features,
Old FALSTAFF, play'd by LOVE, ſhall pleaſe once more,
And humour ſet the audience in a roar.

Actors I've ſeen, and of no vulgar name,
Who, being from one part poſſeſs'd of fame,
Whether they are to laugh, cry, whine, or bawl,
Still introduce that fav'rite part in all.
Here, LOVE, be cautious—ne'er be thou betray'd
To call in that wag FALSTAFF's dang'rous aid;
Like GOTHS of old, howe'er he ſeems a friend,
He'll ſeize that throne, you wiſh him to defend.
In a peculiar mould by HUMOUR caſt,
For FALSTAFF fram'd—Himſelf the Firſt and Laſt,—
He ſtands aloof from all—maintains his ſtate,
And ſcorns, like *Scotſmen*, to aſſimilate.
Vain all diſguiſe—too plain we ſee the trick,
Tho' the Knight wears the weeds of DOMINIC,
And BONIFACE, diſgrac'd, betrays the ſmack,
In ANNO DOMINI, of FALSTAFF's ſack.

Arms croſs'd, brows bent, eyes fix'd, feet marching
A band of malecontents with ſpleen o'erflow; [ſlow,
Wrapt

Wrapt in conceit's impenetrable fog,
Which Pride, like Phœbus, draws from ev'ry bog,
They curſe the managers, and curſe the town,
Whoſe partial favour keeps ſuch merit down.

But if ſome man more hardy than the reſt,
Should dare attack theſe *gnatlings* in their neſt;
At once they riſe with impotence of rage,
Whet their ſmall ſtings, and buzz about the ſtage.
"'Tis breach of privilege!—Shall any dare
"To arm ſatyric truth againſt a play'r?
"Preſcriptive rights we plead time out of mind;
"Actors, unlaſh'd themſelves, may laſh mankind."

What! ſhall Opinion then, of nature free
And lib'ral as the vagrant air, agree
To ruſt in chains like theſe, impos'd by Things
Which, leſs than nothing, ape the pride of kings?
No—though half-poets with half-players join
To curſe the freedom of each honeſt line;
Though rage and malice dim their faded cheek;
What the muſe freely thinks, ſhe'll freely ſpeak;
With juſt diſdain of every paltry ſneer,
Stranger alike to flattery and fear,
In purpoſe fix'd, and to herſelf a rule,
Public Contempt ſhall wait the public Fool.

Austin would always gliſten in French ſilks,
Ackman would Norris be, and Packer Wilks.
For who, like Ackman, can with humour pleaſe;
Who can, like Packer, charm with ſprightly eaſe?
Higher than all the reſt, ſee Bransby ſtrut:
A mighty Gulliver in Lilliput!
Ludicrous nature! which at once could ſhew
A man ſo very High, ſo very Low.

If I forget thee, Blakes, or if I ſay
Aught hurtful, may I never ſee thee play.

Let critics, with a ſupercilious air,
Decry thy various merit and declare
Frenchman is ſtill at top;—but ſcorn that rage
Which, in attacking thee, attacks the age.
French follies, univerſally embrac'd,
At once provoke our mirth, and form our taſte.

Long, from a nation ever hardly us'd,
At random cenſur'd, wantonly abus'd,
Have BRITONS drawn their ſport, with partial view
Form'd gen'ral notions from the raſcal few;
Condemn'd a people, as for vices known,
Which, from their country baniſh'd, ſeek our own.
At length, howe'er, the ſlaviſh chain is broke,
And Senſe, awaken'd, ſcorns her ancient yoke:
Taught by Thee, MOODY, we now learn to raiſe
Mirth from their foibles; from their virtues, praiſe.

Next came the legion, which our *Summer* BAYES.
From Alleys, here and there, contriv'd to raiſe,
Fluſh'd with vaſt hopes, and certain to ſucceed,
With WITS who cannot write, and ſcarce can read.
Vet'rans no more ſupport the rotten cauſe,
No more from ELLIOTS's worth they reap applauſe,
Each on himſelf determines to rely,
Be YATES diſbanded, and let ELLIOT fly.
Never did play'rs ſo well an Author fit,
To nature dead, and foes declar'd to Wit.
So loud each tongue, ſo empty was each head,
So much they talk'd, ſo very little ſaid,
So wond'rous dull, and yet ſo wond'rous vain,
At once ſo willing, and unfit to reign,
That Reaſon ſwore, nor would the oath recall,
Their mighty Maſter's ſoul inform'd them all.

As one with various diſappointments ſad,
Whom Dulneſs only kept from being mad,
Apart from all the reſt great MURPHY came—
Common to fools and wits, the rage of fame.

What tho' the ſons of Nonſenſe hail him SIRE,
AUDITOR, AUTHOR, MANAGER, and SQUIRE,
His reſtleſs ſoul's ambition ſtops not there,
To make his triumphs perfect, dubb him PLAY'R.

In perſon tall, a figure form'd to pleaſe,
Symmetry could charm, depriv'd of eaſe;
When motionleſs he ſtands, we all approve;
What pity 'tis the THING was made to move.

His voice, in one dull, deep, unvaried ſound,
Seems to break forth from caverns under ground.
From hollow cheſt the low ſepulchral note
Unwilling heaves, and ſtruggles in his throat.

Could authors butcher'd give an actor grace,
All muſt to him reſign the foremoſt place.
When he attempts, in ſome one fav'rite part,
To ape the feelings of a manly heart,
His honeſt features the diſguiſe defy,
And his face loudly gives his tongue the lie.

Still in extremes, he knows no happy mean,
Or raving mad, or ſtupidly ſerene.
In cold-wrought ſcenes the lifeleſs actor flags,
In paſſion, tears the paſſion into rags.
Can none remember? Yes—I know all muſt—
When in the MOOR he ground his teeth to duſt,
When o'er the ſtage he FOLLY's ſtandard bore,
Whilſt COMMON-SENSE ſtood trembling at the door.

How few are found with real talents bleſs'd,
Fewer with Nature's gifts contented reſt.
Man from his ſphere eccentric ſtarts aſtray;
All hunt for fame; but moſt miſtake the way.
Bred at St. OMER's to the Shuffling trade,
The hopeful youth a Jeſuit might have made,
With various readings ſtor'd his empty ſkull,
Learn'd without ſenſe, and venerably dull;

Or at ſome banker's deſk, like many more,
Content to tell that two and two make four,
His name had ſtood in CITY ANNALS fair,
And PRUDENT DULLNESS mark'd him for a MAYO

What then could tempt thee, in a critic age,
Such blooming hopes to forfeit on a ſtage?
Could it be worth thy wond'rous waſte of pains
To publiſh to the world thy lack of brains?
Or might not reaſon e'en to thee have ſhewn
Thy greateſt praiſe had been to live *unknown?*
Yet let not vanity, like thine, deſpair:
Fortune makes folly her peculiar care.

A vacant throne high-plac'd in SMITHFIELD viev
To ſacred DULLNESS and her FIRST-BORN due,
Thither with haſte in happy hour repair,
Thy birth-right claim, nor fear a rival there.
SHUTER himſelf ſhall own thy juſter claim,
And VENAL LEDGERS puff their MURPHY's name,
Whilſt VAUGHAN or DAPPER, call him which yo
Shall blow the trumpet and give out the bill, [wil

There rule ſecure from critics and from ſenſe,
Nor once ſhall GENIUS riſe to give offence;
Eternal peace ſhall bleſs the happy ſhore,
And LITTLE FACTIONS break thy reſt no more.

From COVENT-GARDEN crowds promiſcuous go,
Whom the muſe knows not, nor deſires to know.
Vet'rans they ſeem'd, but knew of arms no more
Than if, till that time, arms they never bore:
Like Weſtminſter militia train'd to fight,
They ſcarcely knew the left hand from the right.
Aſham'd among ſuch troops to ſhew the head,
Their chiefs were ſcatter'd, and their Heroes fled.

SPARKS at his glaſs ſat comfortably down
To ſep'rate frown from ſmile, and ſmile from frown

SMITH,

ITH, the genteel, the airy, and the ſmart,
ITH was juſt gone to ſchool to ſay his part;
OSS (a misfortune which we often meet)
AS faſt aſleep at dear STATIRA's feet;
TATIRA,* with her hero to agree,
OOD on her feet as faſt aſleep as he;
ACKLIN, who largely deals in half form'd ſounds,
HO wantonly tranſgreſſes Nature's bounds,
HOſe Acting's hard, affected, and conſtrain'd,
HOſe feature's, as each other they diſdain'd,
variance ſet, inflexible and coarſe,
E'er know the workings of united force,
E'er kindly ſoften to each other's aid,
R ſhew the mingled pow'rs of light and ſhade,
longer for a thankleſs ſtage concern'd,
worthier thoughts his mighty Genius turn'd,
ARANGU'D, gave Lectures, made each ſimple elf
MOſt as good a ſpeaker as himſelf;
HILST the whole town, mad with miſtaken zeal,
AUKWARD rage for ELOCUTION feel;
ILL CITS and grave DIVINES his praiſe proclaim,
D join with SHERIDAN's their MACKLIN's name;
UTER, who never car'd a ſingle pin
HETHER he left out nonſenſe, or put in,
HO aim'd at wit, tho', levell'd in the dark,
E random arrow ſeldom hit the mark,
ISLington, all by the placid ſtream
HERE city ſwains in lap of Dullneſs dream,
HERE, quiet as her ſtrains their ſtrains *do* flow,
AT all the patron by the bards may know;
CRET as night, with ROLT's experienc'd aid,
HE plan of future operations laid,
OJECTED ſchemes the ſummer months to chear,
D ſpin out happy Folly through the year.

But think not, though theſe daſtard-chiefs are fled,
AT COVENT-GARDEN troops ſhall want a head:

* *Mrs. Ward.*

HARLEQUIN comes their chief!—ſee from afar,
The hero ſeated in fantaſtic car!
Wedded to *Novelty*, his only arms
Are wooden ſwords, wands, taliſmans, and charms
On one ſide Folly ſits, by ſome call'd Fun,
And on the other, his arch-patron, LUN.
Behind, for liberty a-thirſt in vain,
SENSE, helpleſs captive, drags the galling chain.
Six rude miſ-ſhapen beaſts the chariot draw,
Whom Reaſon loaths, and Nature never ſaw,
Monſters, with tails of ice, and heads of fire;
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chymæras dire.
Each was beſtrode by full as monſtrous wight,
Giant, Dwarf, Genius, Elf, Hermaphrodite.
The town, as uſual, met him in full cry;
The town, as uſual, knew no reaſon why.
But Faſhion ſo directs, and Moderns raiſe
On Faſhion's mould'ring baſe their tranſient praiſe.

Next, to the field a band of females draw
Their force; for Britain owns no Salique Law:
Juſt to their worth, we female rights admit,
Nor bar their claim to empire or to wit.

Firſt, giggling, plotting chamber-maids arrive,
Hoydens and romps, led on by Gen'ral CLIVE.
In ſpite of outward blemiſhes, ſhe ſhone
For Humour fam'd, and Humour all her own.
Eaſy as if at Home the ſtage ſhe trod,
Nor ſought the critic's praiſe, nor fear'd his rod.
Original in ſpirit and in eaſe,
She pleas'd by hiding all attempts to pleaſe.
No comic actreſs ever yet could raiſe,
On Humour's baſe, more merit or more praiſe.

With all the native vigour of ſixteen,
Among the merry troop conſpicuous ſeen,
See lively POPE advance in *jig* and *trip*
Corinna, Cherry, Honeycomb, and Snip,

N

Not without Art, but yet to Nature true,
She charms the town with humour juſt, yet new.
Chear'd by her promiſe, we the leſs deplore
The fatal time when CLIVE ſhall be no more.

Lo! VINCENT comes—with ſimple grace array'd
She laughs at paltry arts, and ſcorns parade.
Nature through her is by reflection ſhewn,
Whilſt GAY once more knows POLLY for his own.

Talk not to me of diffidence and fear—
I ſee it all, but muſt forgive it here.
Defects like theſe which *modeſt* terrors cauſe,
From impudence itſelf extort applauſe.
Candour and reaſon ſtill take Virtue's part;
We love e'en foibles in ſo good an heart.

Let TOMMY ARNE, with uſual pomp of ſtile,
Whoſe chief, whoſe only merit's to compile,
Who, meanly pilf'ring here and there a bit,
Deals muſic out as MURPHY deals out Wit,
Publiſh propoſals, laws for taſte preſcribe,
And chant the praiſe of an ITALIAN tribe;
Let him reverſe kind Nature's firſt decrees,
And teach e'en BRENT a method not to pleaſe;
But never ſhall a TRULY BRITISH Age,
Bear a vile race of eunuchs on the ſtage.
The boaſted work's call'd NATIONAL in vain,
If one ITALIAN voice pollutes the ſtrain.
Where tyrants rule and ſlaves with joy obey,
Let ſlaviſh minſtrils pour th' enervate lay;
To BRITONS far more noble pleaſures ſpring,
In native notes whilſt BEARD and VINCENT ſing.

Might figure give a title unto fame,
What rival ſhould with YATES diſpute her claim?
But juſtice may not partial trophies raiſe,
Nor ſink the Actreſs in the woman's praiſe.
Still hand in hand her words and actions go,
And the heart feels more than the features ſhow:

For

For, through the regions of that beauteous face,
We no variety of paſſions trace;
Dead to the ſoft emotions of the heart,
No kindred ſoftneſs can thoſe eyes impart;
The brow ſtill fix'd in ſorrow's ſullen frame,
Void of diſtinction, marks all parts the ſame.

What's a fine perſon or a beauteous face,
Unleſs deportment gives them decent grace?
Bleſs'd with all other requiſites to pleaſe,
Some want the ſtriking elegance of Eaſe;
The curious eye their aukward movement tires;
They ſeem like puppets led about by wires.
Others, like ſtatues, in one poſture ſtill,
Give great ideas of the workman's ſkill;
Wond'ring, his art we praiſe the more we view,
And only grieve he gave not motion too.
Weak of themſelves are what we beauties call,
It is the manner which gives ſtrength to all.
This teaches ev'ry beauty to unite,
And brings them forward in the nobleſt light.
Happy in this, behold, amidſt the throng,
With tranſient gleam of grace, HART ſweeps along.

If all the wonders of external grace,
A perſon finely turn'd, a mould of face,
Where, Union rare, Expreſſion's lively force
With Beauty's ſofteſt magic holds diſcourſe,
Attract the eye; if feelings, void of art,
Rouze the quick paſſions, and enflame the art,
If muſic, ſweetly breathing from the tongue,
Captives the ear, BRIDE muſt not paſs unſung.

When fear, which rank ill-nature terms conceit,
By time and cuſtom conquer'd, ſhall retreat;
When judgment, tutor'd by experience ſage,
Shall ſhoot abroad and gather ſtrength from age;

When

When heav'n in mercy ſhall the ſtage releaſe
From the dull ſlumbers of a ſtill-life piece;
When ſome ſtale flow'r, diſgraceful to the walk,
Which long hath hung, tho' wither'd, on the ſtalk,
Shall kindly drop, then BRIDE ſhall make her way,
And merit find a paſſage to the day;
Brought into action ſhe at once ſhall raiſe
Her own renown, and juſtify our praiſe.

Form'd for the tragic ſcene, to grace the ſtage,
With rival excellence of Love and Rage,
Miſtreſs of each ſoft art with matchleſs ſkill
To turn and wind the paſſions as ſhe will;
To melt the heart with ſympathetic woe,
Awake the ſigh, and teach the tear to flow;
To put on frenzy's wild diſtracted glare,
And freeze the ſoul with horror and deſpair;
With juſt deſert enroll'd in endleſs fame,
Conſcious of worth ſuperior, CIBBER came.

When poor Alicia's madd'ning brains are rack'd,
And ſtrongly imag'd griefs her mind diſtract;
Struck with her grief, I catch the madneſs too!
My brain turns round, the headleſs trunk I view!
The roof cracks, ſhakes, and falls!—New horrors riſe,
And Reaſon buried in the ruin lies.

Nobly diſdainful of each ſlaviſh art,
She makes her firſt attack upon the heart:
Pleas'd with the ſummons, it receives her laws,
And all is ſilence, ſympathy, applauſe.

But when by fond ambition drawn aſide,
Giddy with praiſe, and puff'd with female pride,
She quits the tragic ſcene, and, in pretence
To comic merit, breaks down Nature's fence;
I ſcarcely can believe my ears or eyes,
Or find out CIBBER through the dark diſguiſe.

PRITCHARD,

PRITCHARD, by Nature for the ſtage deſign'd,
In perſon graceful, and in ſenſe refin'd;
Her art as much as Nature's friend became,
Her voice as free from blemiſh as her fame.
Who knows ſo well in majeſty to pleaſe,
Attemper'd with the graceful charms of eaſe?

When Congreve's favour'd pantomime to grace,
She comes a captive queen of Mooriſh race;
When Love, Hate, Jealouſy, Deſpair and Rage,
With wildeſt tumults in her breaſt engage;
Still equal to herſelf is Zara ſeen;
Her paſſions are the paſſions of a Queen.

When ſhe to murther whets the tim'rous Thane,
I feel ambition ruſh through ev'ry vein;
Perſuaſion hangs upon her daring tongue,
My heart grows flint, and ev'ry nerve's new ſtrung.
In Comedy—"Nay, there," cries Critic, "hold.
"PRITCHARD's for Comedy too fat and old.
"Who can, with patience, bear the grey coquette,
"Or force a laugh with over-grown Julett?
"Her Speech, Look, Action, Humour, all are juſt;
"But then her age and figure give diſguſt."

Are Foibles then, and Graces of the mind,
In real life, to ſize or age confin'd?
Do ſpirits flow, and is good-breeding plac'd
In any ſet circumference of waiſt?
As we grow old, doth affectation ceaſe,
Or gives not age new vigour to caprice?
If in originals theſe things appear,
Why ſhould we bar them in the copy here
The nice punctilio-mongers of this age,
The grand minute reformers of the ſtage,
Slaves to propriety of ev'ry kind,
Some ſtandard-meaſure for each part ſhould find,
Which when the beſt of Actors ſhall exceed,
Let it devolve to one of ſmaller breed.

All

All actors too upon the back ſhould bear
Certificate of birth;—time, when;—place, where.
For how can critics rightly fix their worth,
Unleſs they know the minute of their birth?
An audience too, deceiv'd, may find too late
That they have clapp'd an actor out of date.

Figure, I own, at firſt may give offence,
And harſhly ſtrike the eye's too curious ſenſe:
But when perfections of the mind break forth,
Humour's chaſte ſallies, Judgment's ſolid worth;
When the pure genuine flame, by Nature taught,
Springs into Senſe, and ev'ry actions Thought;
Before ſuch merit all objections fly;
PRITCHARD's genteel, and GARRICK ſix feet high.

Oft have I, PRITCHARD, ſeen thy wond'rous ſkill
Confeſs'd thee great, but find thee greater ſtill.
That worth, which ſhone in ſcatter'd rays before,
Collected now, breaks forth with double pow'r.
The JEALOUS WIFE!—On that thy trophies raiſe,
Inferior only to the Author's praiſe.

From Dublin, fam'd in legends of Romance
For mighty magic of enchanted lance,
With which her heroes arm'd victorious prove,
And like a flood ruſh o'er the land of Love,
MOSSOP and BARRY came—Names ne'er deſign'd
By fate in the ſame ſentence to be join'd,
Rais'd by the breath of popular acclaim,
They mounted to the pinnacle of Fame;
There the weak brain, made giddy with the height,
Spurr'd on the rival chiefs to mortal fight.
Thus ſportive boys, around ſome baſon's brim,
Behold the pipe-drawn bladders circling ſwim:
But if, from lungs more potent, there ariſe
Two bubbles of a more than common ſize,
Eager for honour they for fight prepare,
Bubble meets bubble, and both ſink to air.

Mossop, attach'd to military plan,
Still kept his eye fix'd on his right-hand man.
Whilſt the mouth meaſures words with ſeeming ſkill,
The right-hand labours, and the left lyes ſtill;
For he reſolv'd on ſcripture grounds to go,
What the right doth, the left-hand ſhall not know.
With ſtudied impropriety of ſpeech,
He ſoars beyond the hackney critic's reach;
To epithets allots emphatic ſtate,
Whilſt principals, ungrac'd, like lacquies wait;
In ways firſt trodden by himſelf excels,
And ſtands alone in indeclinables;
Conjunction, preposition, adverb, join
To ſtamp new vigour on the nervous line:
In monoſyllables his thunders roll,
HE, SHE, IT, AND, WE, YE, THEY, fright the ſoul.

In perſon taller than the common ſize,
Behold where Barry draws admiring eyes!
When lab'ring paſſions, in his boſom pent,
Convulſive rage, and ſtruggling heave for vent;
Spectators, with imagin'd terrors warm,
Anxious expect the burſting of the ſtorm:
But, all unfit in ſuch a pile to dwell,
His voice comes forth, like Echo from her cell;
To ſwell the tempeſt needful aid denies,
And all a-down the ſtage in feeble murmur dies.

What man, like Barry, with ſuch pains can err
In elocution, action, character?
What man could give, if Barry was not here,
Such well applauded tenderneſs to Lear?
Who elſe can ſpeak ſo very, very fine,
That ſenſe may kindly end with ev'ry line?

Some dozen lines before the ghoſt is there,
Behold him for the ſolemn ſcene prepare,

See

See how he frames his eyes, poiſes each limb,
Puts the whole body into proper trim.—
From whence we learn, with no great ſtretch of art,
Five lines hence comes a ghoſt, and, Ha! a ſtart.

When he appears moſt perfect, ſtill we find
Something which jars upon, and hurts the mind,
Whatever lights upon a part are thrown,
We ſee too plainly they are not his own.
No flame from Nature ever yet he caught,
Nor knew a feeling which he was not taught;
He rais'd his trophies on the baſe of art,
And conn'd his paſſions, as he conn'd his part.

QUIN, from afar, lur'd by the ſcent of fame,
A Stage Leviathan, put in his claim.
Pupil of BETTERTON and BOOTH. Alone,
Sullen he walk'd, and deem'd the chair his own.
For how ſhould Moderns, muſhrooms of the day,
Who ne'er thoſe maſters knew, know how to play?
Grey-bearded vet'rans, who with partial tongue,
Extol the times when they themſelves were young;
Who, having loſt all reliſh for the ſtage,
See not their own defects, but laſh the age,
Receiv'd, with joyful murmurs of applauſe,
Their darling chief, and lin'd his fav'rite cauſe.

Far be it from the candid muſe to tread
Inſulting o'er the aſhes of the dead,
But, juſt to living merit, ſhe maintains,
And dares the teſt, whilſt GARRICK's Genius reigns;
Ancients, in vain, endeavour to excel,
Happily prais'd, if they could act as well.
But, though preſcription's force we diſallow,
Nor to antiquity ſubmiſſive bow;
Though we deny imaginary grace,
Founded on accidents of time and place;
Yet real worth of ev'ry growth ſhall bear
Due praiſe, nor muſt we, QUIN, forget thee there.

His

His words bore ſterling weight, nervous and ſtrong,
In manly tides of ſenſe they roll'd along.
Happy in art, he chiefly had pretence
To keep up numbers, yet not forfeit ſenſe:
No actor ever greater heights could reach
In all the labour'd artifice of ſpeech.

Speech! Is that all?—And ſhall an actor found
An univerſal fame on partial ground?
Parrots themſelves ſpeak properly by rote,
And, in ſix months, my dog ſhall howl by note.
I laugh at thoſe, who, when the ſtage they tread,
Neglect the heart, to compliment the head;
With ſtrict propriety their care's confin'd
To weigh out words, while paſſion halts behind.
To Syllable-diſſectors they appeal,
Allow them accent, cadence,—Fools may feel;
But, Spite of all the criticiſing elves,
Thoſe who would make us feel, muſt feel themſelves.

His eyes, in gloomy ſocket taught to roll,
Proclaim'd the ſullen habit of his ſoul.
Heavy and phlegmatic he trod the ſtage,
Too proud for Tenderneſs, too dull for Rage.
When Hector's lovely widow ſhines in Tears,
Or Rowe's gay Rake dependant virtue jeers,
With the ſame caſt of features he is ſeen
To chide the Libertine, and court the Queen.
From the tame ſcene, which without paſſion flows,
With juſt deſert his reputation roſe;
Nor leſs he pleas'd, when, on ſome ſurly plan,
He was, at once, the Actor and the Man.
In Brute he ſhone unequall'd: all agree
GARRICK's not half ſo great a brute as he.
When Cato's labour'd ſcenes are brought to view,
With equal praiſe the Actor labour'd too,
For ſtill you'll find, trace paſſions to their root,
Small diff'rence 'twixt the Stoic and the Brute.

In

In fancied ſcenes, as in life's real plan,
He could not, for a moment, ſink the Man.
In whate'er caſt his character was laid,
Self ſtill, like oil, upon the ſurface play'd.
Nature, in ſpite of all his ſkill, crept in:
Horatio, Dorax, Falſtaff,—ſtill 'twas QUIN.

Next follows SHERIDAN.—A doubtful name,
As yet unſettled in the rank of fame.
This, fondly laviſh in his praiſes grown,
Gives him all merit: That allows him none.
Between them both, we'll ſteer the middle courſe,
Nor, loving praiſe, rob judgment of her force.

Juſt his conceptions, natural and great:
His feelings ſtrong, his words enforc'd with weight.
Was ſpeech-fam'd QUIN himſelf to hear him ſpeak,
Envy would drive the colour from his cheek:
But ſtep-dame Nature, niggard of her grace,
Deny'd the ſocial pow'rs of voice and face.
Fix'd in one frame of features, glare of eye,
Paſſions, like chaos, in confuſion lye:
In vain the wonders of his ſkill are try'd
To form diſtinction Nature hath deny'd.
His voice no touch of harmony admits,
Irregularly deep, and ſhrill by fits:
The two extremes appear like man and wife,
Coupled together for the ſake of ſtrife.

His action's always ſtrong, but ſometimes ſuch
That Candour muſt declare he acts too much.
Why muſt impatience fall three paces back?
Why paces three return to the attack?
Why is the right leg too forbid to ſtir,
Unleſs in motion ſemicircular?
Why muſt the hero with the Nailor vie,
And hurl the cloſe-clench'd fiſt at noſe or eye?

In

In royal John, with Philip angry grown,
I thought he would have knock'd poor DAVIES down.
Inhuman tyrant! was it not a ſhame,
To fright a king ſo harmleſs and ſo tame?
But, ſpite of all defects, his glories riſe;
And Art, by Judgment form'd, with Nature vies;
Behold him ſound the depth of HUBERT's ſoul,
Whilſt in his own contending paſſions roll;
View the whole ſcene, with critic judgment ſcan,
And then deny him Merit if you can.
Where he falls ſhort, 'tis Nature's fault alone;
Where he ſucceeds, the Merit's all his own.

Laſt GARRICK came.—Behind him throng a train
Of ſnarling critics, ignorant as vain.

One finds out,—"He's of ſtature ſomewhat low,—
"Your Hero always ſhould be tall you know.—
"True nat'ral greatneſs all conſiſts in height."
Produce your voucher, Critic.—"Sergeant KYTE."

Another can't forgive the paltry arts,
By which he makes his way to ſhallow hearts;
Mere pieces of fineſſe, traps for applauſe.—
"Avaunt, unnat'ral Start, affected Pauſe."

For me, by Nature form'd to judge with phlegm,
I can't acquit by wholeſale, nor condemn.
The beſt things carried to exceſs are wrong:
The ſtart may be too frequent, pauſe too long;
But, only us'd in proper time and place,
Severeſt judgment muſt allow them Grace.

If Bunglers, form'd on Imitation's plan,
Juſt in the way that monkies mimic man,
Their copied ſcene with mangled arts diſgrace,
And pauſe and ſtart with the ſame vacant face;
We join the critic laugh; thoſe tricks we ſcorn,
Which ſpoil the ſcenes they mean them to adorn.

ut when, from Nature's pure and genuine ſource,
heſe ſtrokes of Acting flow with gen'rous force,
When in the features all the ſoul's portray'd,
nd paſſions, ſuch as GARRICK's are diſplay'd,
o me they ſeem from quickeſt feelings caught:
ach ſtart is Nature; and each pauſe is Thought.

When Reaſon yields to Paſſion's wild alarms,
nd the whole ſtate of man is up in arms;
What, but a Critic, could condemn the Play'r,
or pauſing here, when Cool Senſe pauſes there?
Whilſt, working from the Heart, the fire I trace,
nd mark it ſtrongly flaming to the Face;
Whilſt, in each ſound, I hear the very man?
can't catch words, and pity thoſe who can.

Let wits, like ſpiders, from the tortur'd brain
ine-draw the critic-web with curious pain;
he gods—a kindneſs I with thanks muſt pay,—
Have form'd me of a coarſer kind of clay;
Nor ſtung with envy, nor with ſpleen diſeas'd,
Tho' a dull creature, ſtill with Nature pleas'd;
Since to thy praiſes, GARRICK, I agree,
And, pleas'd with Nature, muſt be pleas'd with Thee.

Now might I tell, how ſilence reign'd throughout,
And deep attention huſh'd the rabble rout:
How ev'ry claimant, tortur'd with deſire,
Was pale as aſhes, or as red as fire:
But, looſe to Fame, the muſe more ſimply acts,
Rejects all flouriſh, and relates mere facts,

The Judges, as the ſev'ral parties came,
With temper heard, with Judgment weigh'd each Claim,
And, in their ſentence happily agreed,
In name of both, Great SHAKESPEARE thus decreed:

" If manly Senſe; if Nature link'd with Art;
" If thorough knowledge of the Human Heart;

" If Pow'rs of acting vaſt and unconfin'd;
" If feweſt faults with greateſt Beauties join'd;
" If ſtrong Expreſſion, and ſtrange Pow'rs which l
" Within the magic circle of the Eye;
" If feelings which few hearts, like his, can know
" And which no face ſo well as His can ſhow,
" Deſerve the Pref'rence; GARRICK take the Chai
" Nor quit it—till thou place an equal there."

FINIS.

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